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Letter dated 22 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my letter dated 16 September 2013 relaying the findings and recommendations of the United Nations multidisciplinary mission that visited the Central African Republic from 21 to 26 August 2013 (S/2013/557), and to Security Council resolution 2121 (2013) of 10 October 2013, in which the Council requested me to provide details about my proposals for the protection of United Nations personnel and installations, including the possible establishment of a guard unit.

You will recall that I recommended that urgent measures be taken to enhance the safety and security of United Nations personnel and installations in Bangui and across the country, in light of the absence of reliable national security forces. Based on an assessment of the prevailing risks and threats for United Nations personnel and premises, and taking into account the overall risk mitigation arrangements, I believe that a guard unit should be established to enable the implementation of the mandated tasks of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA).

Such a guard unit would provide perimeter security and access control for United Nations facilities and installations in Bangui and across the country. This task would be implemented in coordination with the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic and, subsequently, with the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, following the transition between the two missions. In addition, the guard unit would carry out escort duties and provide mobile security for United Nations personnel outside United Nations premises. Finally, this guard unit would conduct evacuation operations for United Nations personnel under imminent threat of physical violence.

The Secretariat has developed plans for the deployment of a United Nations guard unit comprising military units, provided as contingents by Member States, which would form part of BINUCA. Initially composed of 250 military personnel deployed in Bangui, the guard unit would, in a second phase, increase its strength to a battalion-size unit of 560 military personnel, with its own enablers, in order to progressively deploy to locations outside Bangui where the United Nations has a presence. Given the urgency of the situation, and considering that the generation of United Nations troops will take some time, as an interim measure, up to 250 military personnel could be temporarily redeployed to the guard unit from one of the peacekeeping operations of the Organization.

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The United Nations has also considered contracting the services of an armed private security company to perform the functions of the guard unit as described above. Given the lack of available private security companies with the appropriate capacities in the Central African Republic, this option would entail undergoing a lengthy international procurement process to identify a suitable company.

As you are aware, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/254 A of 12 April 2013, stressed that the United Nations should proceed with the recruitment of an armed private security company only as a last resort and when other alternatives, including protection by the host country, other support from Member States or internal United Nations system resources, are inadequate. I therefore recommend the deployment of a guard unit as part of BINUCA, using the first option as outlined above, rather than through the contracting of an armed private security company.

Pending the conclusion of an amendment to the existing status-of-mission agreement for BINUCA that would extend the necessary legal protections to the guard unit and to the Member States contributing contingents to the unit, it would be understood that the provisions of the model status-of-forces agreement (A/45/594) that apply to and in respect of the military personnel of national contingents assigned to the military component of a United Nations operation and to the property, funds and assets of the Member States contributing those contingents, shall apply provisionally to and in respect of the military personnel of national contingents assigned to the guard unit and to the property, funds and assets of the Member States contributing those contingents.

I should be grateful if you could confirm that these arrangements are acceptable to the Security Council. If so, it would then be my intention to proceed to identify units which could be temporarily redeployed, with the agreement of the troop-contributing country concerned, to BINUCA from one of the peacekeeping operations of the Organization, while at the same time proceeding to generate the guard units that would eventually replace them.

In accordance with existing practice, I would notify the Security Council of the concurrence of the host country and of the troop-contributing country whose units would be temporarily redeployed to Bangui.

I would be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon